

Preface

The international community has demonstrated a growing interest in the subject of conventional arms proliferation since the 1991 Gulf War. Particular attention has focussed on the risks posed to regional and international peace and security from excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons, the potentially negative effects on peaceful social and economic development of arms transfers, and the dangers of increasing illicit and covert arms trafficking.

The Register of Conventional Arms, which was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/36 L of 6 December 1991, is the only global international effort aimed at promoting transparency in the conventional arms trade. It involves voluntary submission by Member States of data on international transfers of seven defined categories of armaments. It also encourages the provision of data on national holdings, procurement of weapons from national production and other relevant policies.

Canada is a strong supporter of the United Nations Conventional Arms Register. Enhancing the transparency of global and regional arms trade is one of the key issues on the emerging arms control agenda. Transparency can serve to improve the level of predictability and trust in a region and provide a crucial step in the development of a genuine security dialogue.

Canada supports the expansion of the register to cover additional categories of conventional armaments, national holdings and procurement through national production. We are also actively encouraging consideration of regional variants of the Register in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific regions.

We have encouraged full participation by all Member States in reporting data to the Register, recognizing the practical difficulties that some countries may face in undertaking this.

This Annotated Bibliography, which provides a unique and comprehensive reference tool, has been prepared to assist government officials and researchers in their efforts on this issue and to promote greater use of the Register by all Member States.

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